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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

PHYSICIAN AND PHARMACISTS INDICTED

The United States Attorney's Office announced today that a Grand Jury sitting in Hammond, Indiana, returned a 24-count indictment alleging the illegal dispensation of prescription drugs against four individuals. Charged were JONG HI BEK; RICHARD FALOONA; LEONARD TUCKER; and ROBERT DICKERSON, d/b/a 55TH AVENUE PHARMACY.

BEK, age 62, of Chicago, Illinois, was a medical doctor practicing at 2247 Broadway in Gary, Indiana. FALOONA, age 53,

of Gary, Indiana, was the office manager for BEK. TUCKER and DICKERSON are both licensed pharmacists who own and operate 55th Avenue Pharmacy in Merrillville, Indiana.

The indictment alleges that these individuals conspired to dispense prescription drugs outside the scope of professional practice and not for legitimate medical purposes. The alleged conspiracy occurred from September 2000 through July 2002, and involved a number of different prescription medications including Vicodin, Xanax, Darvocet and Halcion.

Persons came to BEK's medical office and waited in long lines to be seen by BEK. Many were out-of-state, some from as far away as California. Regardless of the person's medical condition, BEK prescribed a number of drugs, often the type requested by the patient.

BEK and FALOONA directed these persons to particular pharmacies, including 55th Avenue Pharmacy, as many local pharmacies would not honor BEK's prescriptions. DICKERSON and TUCKER filled these prescriptions, disregarding the fact that certain combinations of drugs prescribed by BEK were contraindicated and potentially dangerous.

The indictment also charges that these individuals engaged in a scheme to defraud Anthem/Blue Cross/Blue Shield. The indictment alleges that the defendants prescribed and dispensed prescription medication to an individual covered by Blue

Cross/Blue Shield. The medications were not for any legitimate medical purpose.

The indictment also alleges 22 counts of illegally dispensing a controlled substance.

BEK is named in all 24 counts; FALOONA is named in Counts 1 and 3 through 24; TUCKER is named in Counts 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 22, and 24; DICKERSON is named in Counts 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 22, and 24. Forfeiture of numerous bank accounts, the 55th Avenue pharmacy and other assets of the defendants obtained from these illegal schemes is also sought.

BEK, TUCKER AND DICKERSON appeared before a United States Magistrate Judge late Monday for their initial appearance and arraignments. FALOONA is scheduled to appear before a U.S. Magistrate Judge September 8 for his initial appearance and arraignment. A status hearing is scheduled for October 24 at 10 a.m.

This indictment was the result of an extensive, cooperative law enforcement effort involving the following agencies: the Drug Enforcement Administration; the U.S. Food and Drug Administration; the Gary, Indiana Police Department; the Indiana State Police; and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. The Benton Harbor, Michigan Police Department also provided assistance in this investigation. This case will be

prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Diane L. Berkowitz and Susan Collins.

"Today's indictment shows that the Department of Justice and FDA's Office of Criminal Investigation can effectively strike at medical professionals who violate the public trust and endanger the public health," said FDA Commissioner, Mark B. McClellan, M.D., Ph.D. "FDA is committed to maintaining the integrity of the prescription process -- a process essential to the safe and effective use of potent medicines."

United States Attorney Joseph S. Van Bokkelen said: "This indictment is the result of extensive city, state and federal law enforcement efforts. It represents this office's ongoing commitment to investigate, and where appropriate, to prosecute those who abuse their positions of trust."

If convicted, all sentences and fines will be determined by the federal Sentencing Guidelines.

The United States Attorney's Office emphasized that an Indictment is merely an allegation and that all persons charged are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.

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